

## Mayor's Message

April 2009

A few years ago our City stood on the brink of an important decision. With the foresight of other City leaders, a fiber-optic ring was put in place around Murray to connect government and education services. This technology provided great inner connectivity between the various departments in the City, as well as for the Murray schools and district office. When the opportunity came to share this technology with City residents, I felt it was a way to provide long term infrastructure and service capabilities that would be valuable now and in the future. The Utah Telecommunication Open Infrastructure Agency (UTOPIA) was created as a model to allow residents and businesses to choose providers that would give them incredible speed on-line, plus phone and video service at reasonable prices.

This endeavor has not been without it's challenges, but in the big picture, I'd like to share where we are and where we hope to go with this amazing service. Murray joined UTOPIA as a pledging City, along with 10 others, to allow for the connectivity necessary for the fiber to be in place and to provide redundancy. As many of you know, the fiber has been placed in the ground or strung on overhead wires to be brought into your home if you choose to use the service. About 60% of the City has areas where fiber is currently available. The original ring belonging to the City has become part of UTOPIA and we continue to use it for government and education purposes.

The model has been adjusted over the years as costs for placing the fiber have increased. These eleven cities have pledged to back the financing of this infrastructure. At this point in time, no tax dollars have been used on this project. That may change and we may need to help pay for some of the operations until there are enough customers to cover expenses. I firmly believe that this is a valuable service and that it allows us, as a City, to expand our opportunities, to work more efficiently, and to save money. In 1913, Murray City leaders had the foresight to begin a power system. There were rough early years in making this service be self funding, but now it is a crown jewel, providing reliable, cost effective power and it belongs to all Murray residents. UTOPIA can become that backbone for technology for our City.

New management of UTOPIA has focused on improving the variety and quality of providers that customers may choose. They currently include Fibernet, FuzeCore, Veracity, XMission and Nuvant. Prime Time has joined the list most recently and is in the process of purchasing MStar, to become the newest triple play provider. I am optimistic that more providers will continue to come aboard to offer more choices. Offering very fast data transmission, the ability to own the infrastructure, and the choice of providers are some of the reasons the City is willing to support this service.

I would like to share some of the ways that UTOPIA is key in proving "There is More to Murray" in future Mayor's Messages. If you would like more information about this service, you can go to [www.utopianet.org](http://www.utopianet.org) or call 801-613-3800.